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Epidemic Franklin Co. Pa.

NO. 11

D. Chopin

Epidemic Franklin County, Penns.^a

Nich: B. Lane -

Nov^r 12th 1821.

48 W. 6th - Mrs Rowan.

Nich: B. Lane - Penns.^a

admitted March 9th 1822

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An account of an Epidemic, which prevailed in
Franklin County, Pa. in 1821, by Nicholas S. Lane.

The disease was more particularly observed near to Chambersburg, a small town, situated on elevated ground at the confluence of the Potomac spring with East Conowingo river creek. It is the capital of Franklin County, and lies between the North and South Mountains. The country surrounding it is fertile and well cultivated, and is generally healthy.

During the last winter, the weather was extremely cold. The country was generally free from disease, with the exception of some cases of Inflammatory fever, and Pneumonia Symplicis. The spring was rather backward, being wet and cold and the atmosphere very foggy. Summer commenced, as usual, with variable temperature, some days were excessively warm while others were cool. There were no rains of any consequence until harvest, when they were slight, & continued only for a day or two; indeed the drought

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was so great in the early part of this season, that vegetation suffered considerably.

During all this time, the country was remarkably healthy, and continued so until about the middle of July, when there occurred a few cases of Dysentery, which were very obstinate. This disease, however, soon disappeared, and gave place to the epidemic, the subject of this essay.

This disease was distinguished by the following symptoms: Sickness, languor, lassitude, pains in the bones, sickness of stomach, coldness, a creeping sensation along the back, and pain in the side; the tongue was natural, vomiting sometimes appeared in the first stage and the bowels were costive; skin was dry, shrivelled, & cold. These symptoms were soon followed by the fever, during which the pulse was not very full but quick and frequent, the skin very hot and dry and the fever high, often continuing for twenty four hours; the tongue was parched and furred in the middle and of a brown colour; the thirst was excessive. You

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taking drink, it was frequently rejected; the bowels were torpid; the eye wild, and sometimes fixed and dull; the countenance gloomy and clouded; great debility & inclination to sleep prevailed, with the mind often delirious and the respiration anxious and uneasy.

The third stage commenced sometimes in twelve, and often not till twenty four hours had elapsed. The respiration was sometimes free, at others cold & clammy, in general appearing partially and imperfectly over the surface.

The patients frequently complained of illness for several days, sometimes they were taken suddenly after slight exercise, and were attacked equally in the day & night.

The disease assumed the Intermittent, Remittent, and Continued type; it first appeared in the quotidian, tertian, quartan, and double tertian forms, and its type was sometimes characterised by coma, and convulsions of an hysterical and Epileptic character.

The disease was generally tertian, in its type, pursuing this form throughout its whole continuance, sometimes

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paroxysms, becoming gradual, quotidian, and very often limited; but the changes sometimes were sudden, and not unfrequently protracted and slow, before they exhibited the symptoms of the new type; the intermissions were feverish and short, consisting only of a few hours when the medicine could be given. The paroxysm would often cease in the evening; and it was necessary to exhibit the medicine during the night, to obviate the attack of the succeeding day.

This disease first appeared in the neighborhood of Chambersburg, about the latter part of July, became considerable in August, gained its height in September, and terminated in the latter end of October.

It was general; whole families were confined at once. It did not, however, prove mortal; there were but few deaths, and those which did occur, took place after the third paroxysm, in the severe form of the disease, or after relapses, which were frequent, occurring three or four times in the same person, and protracted by the slightest exposure. In other parts of the County, for instance in

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the neighborhood of Mercersburg, which is a small town about sixteen miles south west of Chambersburg, the disease prevailed to a more alarming extent; as also in the neighborhood of Green Castle, and Haysburg, both small towns, which are in a southern direction; the former distant eleven miles, and the latter fifteen. I have understood from a very respectable practitioner of the former place, that the disease first made its appearance in his neighborhood in harvest, and it was likewise much more destructive. Immediately in the borough of Chambersburg it was as healthy as usual. The only cases which occurred there, were principally confined to its suburbs, and along the water courses. It is true there were likewise cases at a distance from the water; but they, it is probable, were owing to improper diet, as they occurred in the lower classes of society. Few other cases occurred. Those who were attacked in the town, have generally exposed themselves to the noxious districts, or to night air. I am not sufficiently acquainted with the character of this disease, as it appeared in our neighbors

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It is difficult to ascertain, to what cause it was owing; it appeared more frequently along the water courses; in the open country more than in billages; & in the neighborhood of ponds.

It is well known, that marsh miasma, or the effluvia arising from stagnant water or marshy ground, when acted upon by heat, is the most frequent cause of Intermittent; but as I before remarked we had very little wet weather: May we not suppose it was owing to the drought, together with exposure to the cool evenings and mornings, being in some degree modified, by the situations near water, ponds, or marshes?

In the first, or cold stage, which came on with dulling, languor, lassitude, pains in the limbs, sickness at stomach, with a creeping sensation along the back, cold and dry skin, sweet's powder was found to produce steady relief, by inducing perspiration, but the practice which was most generally pursued, was the evacuation of the

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alimentary canal by emetics and cathartics; for which purpose the吐瀉丸 of Matsunoy, calomel and Salap were preferred. When an emetic and purgative were administered in the early stage, they were found often to subdue the disease: When prejudice prevented the exhibition of emetics, the calomel and Salap were given in very large doses, which frequently had the desired effect: It is worthy of remark, that the bowels were torpid, and scarcely to be moved by the largest doses.

It was at first ascribed to the impropriety of the articles employed for that purpose: To an adult we often gave from thirty five to forty five grains of Salap, and twelve of Calomel, with two grains of Spicacuanha, and even, when given in such doses, it became necessary to repeat them the second or third time before they operated.

In the second stage, or that which was attended by a quick pulse, hot dry skin, parched tongue, excessive thirst with high fever, bloodletting, and afterwards emetics and cathartics were prescribed. To excite perspiration

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tion, sudorific powders, composed of two drams of Nitrate
of Potash, and two grains of Tartar Emetic, and divided
into eight powders were exhibited, one being given every
two hours; these powders had the effect of soon reducing
arterial action and preparing the system for the Peru-
vian Bark, which was given in combination with pulver-
ized Racc ginger, or Virginia Snake-root, in doses of two to
four drams, every one or two hours during the intermission,
according to the length of the interval. Although the fever
was high, and the pulse tolerably full, the lancet was
not often employed; bloodletting, it is true, was indi-
cated, but it too often happened that the patient be-
came prostrated after small venesection. Nothing appeared
to have a more happy effect than emetics, and they
were frequently repeated with most unequivocal ad-
vantage. I remarked, in the preceding part of this es-
say, that the bowels were extremely torpid; they did
not, however, always continue so throughout, for not
unfrequently diarrhoea occurred and astringents in
union with the bark were necessary. Cholera also occur-

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red, and was sometimes peculiarly distressing; nothing
could be retained on the stomach, excepting the ^{solution} ~~sedition~~
of salt of Tartar combined with the essence of peppermint,
which usually succeeded in checking it. Arsenic & Opium
in the form of pills, in the dose of one twelfth of a
grain of the former to one third of a grain of the latter,
were given every eight hours, during the intermission;
but as they were sometimes very short, it was abso-
lutely necessary to give the bark at the same time;
a practice which proved very successful. It was found
by my preceptor, whose experience was considerable, that
he had not derived the same advantage from the use
of Arsenic this year, as in former times. As a local
application, cloths wet with ^{Drinegar} ~~Drinegar~~, applied to the
head, greatly relieved it of pain. In the soporose
stage, which was sometimes attended with low delirium,
we found it necessary and useful to apply blisters
to the wrists and nape of the neck; the mind
became composed and the system generally relieved.
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at the onset of the disease, administered emetics, purges,
diaphoretics, and Mercury, and cupped for the affections
of the head, and used the warm bath; but upon the whole,
I do not believe that this treatment was more successful
than that already detailed. I have known ptyalism to
be produced by the calomel which was given in con-
junction with Salop. Remaining too long in the Alimen-
tary canal, but I cannot say that it was conducive of
any salutary effect; on the contrary, we always endeavor-
ed to avoid it, as the mouth became so sore in con-
sequence, that it was only by the greatest persuasion, we
could get our patients to take the necessary medicines.

Children were principally attacked by the Epileptic form,
in which purging and the warm bath, were valuable
remedies. In the Hysterical form, nothing was so evidently
beneficial as emetics. A frequent consequence of
this disease, was an anasarcaous swelling of the
whole system; to remove which, diuretics & diaphoretics,
particularly Cremo Tartar and Nitrate of Potash were used.
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was observed to avoid premature exposure, as the disease continued with redoubled violence; therefore, in the convalescence, we were in the habit of giving two or three drams of the bark every four or six hours, for several days.

The preceding remarks apply only to the Intermittent type. The Remittent form, characterized by sighing, yawning, great anxiety, pains in the head and back, heat over the whole body, great thirst, difficulty of breathing and rejection of spirits, the tongue not much altered in appearance, tho' a little furred, nausea and vomiting, pulse frequent and small, differed little in its treatment from the Intermittent variety. Emetics, Cathartics, diaphoretics, and blisters were used; as soon as the disease intermitted, which was the great object of our practice, we administered the bark. The stomach was sometimes so irritable as not to retain any thing, and in these cases the disease proved mortal.

The continued type came on with the usual symptoms attendant on this disease, such as cold sensations over the whole back, tremors of the limbs and rigors of the body,

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pains in the head, back, and loins, and difficulty of
respiration; after a time, the cheeks became flushed, with
heat over the whole body; the skin and tongue were dry,
with pains in the head, nausea and vomiting; the bowels
active, great inclination to drink, and the pulse fre-
quent, tho' not full. This type of the disease was less
common than either of the preceding; comparatively
speaking, it seldom occurred. Emetics and purgatives were
the first means which were had recourse to, and when
the pulse was very quick, with some degree of fullness, so
as to warrant the employment of the lancet, a small
quantity of blood was detacted, which it was seldom
necessary to repeat. Our next object was to determine
to the surface, for which purpose the Dover's powder,
or the sudorifics already mentioned, were exhibited
and were generally effectual. Blisters, to the wrists, &
sinapisms to the feet also became necessary when
the disease was protracted. The intention of this treatment,
was to bring the disease to an intermitent type, and
in general it was successful; the bark was then useful.

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Epistaxis was frequent in this epidemic, and was not
confined to any particular type, proving that the head
was much affected; astringent solutions drawn up into
the nostrils were used without benefit, and in consequence
of previous debility of the system, bloodletting was considered
as hazardous; the application of a blister to the back
part of the neck, generally relieved it.

This epidemic was greatly increased by the heat of the
weather: sometime in the month of October, rain fell &
lasted for several days, after which it became cool.
There occurred but few cases during its continuance; warm
weather succeeded; after which, many people were attacked,
and a great many relapses occurred.

1845-50

25 - Cooke

Dr. Chapman

Son of Fred. C. King

distilled from
as at
Pudersburg 1877

James Cooke

admitted March 12th - 1822